

PRESS RELEASE
13 August 1992

Genocide permitted in Bosnia-Herzegovina

Mr Salem Azzam, Secretary General of the Islamic Council, today vehemently condemned international inaction over the tragedy rapidly unfolding in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The Council said that the world is aware, from its television screens and its newspapers, of atrocities the like of which Europe has not seen since the Second World War, and has learnt new words such as 'ethnic cleansing'. There is mass killing, mass destruction of towns and cities, mass expulsion of people from their homes and villages, there are concentration camps and 'ghetto villages', torture and beatings, and relief and medical workers, food and water queues, even funerals, are being deliberately targeted. Hundreds of thousands of people are the victims of a systematic plan solely on account of their religious beliefs or ethnic origins. And the world knows.

People of all faiths and persuasions are becoming increasingly angry and frustrated that Western governments, especially the Bush Administration, as the most powerful country in the world, are doing nothing to combat the aggression, which is in itself an encouragement to the Serbs. The Council said that many people were asking why the Bush Administration, which had been able to mobilise 750,000 troops across the world to fight the Gulf war, was unable to intervene in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Was it because there is no oil in Bosnia? And of what use is a draft UN resolution permitting the use of force to protect convoys if the people for whom the supplies are intended are already dead?

The Council called upon the governments of the EC and the US to act urgently, in the name of humanity, to put a halt to this genocide by using all available means including military force. The Serbs have been able to use the power of the former Yugoslav military to decimate Croatia and Bosnia. It is clear that this can be stopped only by military action. Safe havens can be created and protected until such time as people can return to their rightful homes and a system of compensation can be organised under the auspices of the United Nations. The Council urged the United Nations, whose Charter has been so violated, to protect and guarantee the integrity of Bosnia-Herzegovina, a sovereign state and one of its members, and to set up a war crimes tribunal to investigate the role played by Serbian leaders in the atrocities. The Council also called upon the Organisation of the Islamic Conference to act to mobilise Muslim countries to sever all diplomatic and economic links with Serbia and to provide help for the victims of aggression, for example, the means to defend themselves, and immediate funding and shelter for the rapidly growing numbers of refugees. The burden on all citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina must be eased.